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THE
LAYMAN's REMARKS
ON
Mr. R. M.'s REPLY
TO THE
LAYMAN's ADDRESS
TO THE
BAPTISTS.

YESTERDAY I received (what is improperly styled) a reply to my Address.

I should think it lost time to follow this writer through the detraction and abuse, with which he has been pleased to honour me. Upon a very slight view, they will speak for themselves. If I had been an *enemy* to the baptists, as he would represent me to be, I could not have wished to exhibit a more striking and awful proof of the fiery and uncharitable disposition, which prevails amongst some (I am far from saying all) of that persuasion, than what this person affords in the publication now before me. Had I been a *Jesuit*, a *Roman Catholic*, or a *Father-Confessor* (terms of reproach which

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this



this gentleman's meekness has provided) I hope, I should have acted at least like an *honest* man. Let us see, whether this angry baptist, in the proof of his *gospel obedience*, and following *all* the commandments of God (of which he makes so loud a profession) has done likewise; or rather, whether he has not brought *a railing accusation*, and *borne false witness against his neighbour*. 'Tis a bad cause that must be supported by calumny and invective; and none but bad men (whatever be their pretensions) will stoop to make use of them.

This worthy man sets out with producing evidences of my candor; and it must be owned, that, garbled and mutilated as my words appear in his very ingenious arrangement of them, I could scarce believe my Eyes when I first read them, and began to think, that if he had not been imposed upon by some surreptitious copy of the addreſſ, he must really have been guilty of some very foul dealing himself. However, I soon found, that it happens very unfortunately for this writer (as sometimes *over* ingenious people do make a *ſlip*), that if any one shall think it worth his while to compare and collate both his tract and mine, placing his quotations by my expressions, he will have some very striking Instances how far the heat of a party may carry a man. To make an author say what he does not mean, might be done by a *common* genius; but to make him assert what he never would have thought of, seems reserved for such people as this bright luminary of the Baptists. The only favour I desire of the members of his denomination (among whom I know some exemplary Christians, who must blush for the unhappy spirit of this lame defender) is, that they will be so faithful to conscience and reason as to compare notes, and see how justly, decently,

decently, and fairly, this person has quoted me. If this be the best sample of his professed obedience to *all* the commands of *Christ*, of which I take *truth* to be one; he may keep the rest of his cargo to himself. The world would do better without it; and, I may add, his own cause would be less disgraced.

I shall omit to dwell upon his apparent ignorance, and the incorrect construction of his language: A common reader may notice them, and they are of no consequence but to himself. Yet one cannot help smiling at the affectation of his Hebrew criticism, p. 29. as though he would be thought to have made a progress in learning, when it evidently appears, that he has not made the very *common* beginnings towards it. Those, who will wade through his performance, may soon perceive, that his knowledge and Christianity are much upon a par; the one as contemptible, as the other is dubious.

I must charge this writer with *ten* direct and palpable falsehoods, over and above continual instances of *mutilated quotation* and perverse wresting of my meaning, which are indeed but little better. For the proof of the former, I submit the following evidences to the reader; and, for a demonstration of the latter, I refer him to the pamphlet itself.

1. He says (p. 7) "Should our Lord's interrogation to the Jews be put to our author [meaning "me"] *The Baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of men?* Mat. xxi. 25. HE WOULD ANSWER AT ONCE, "of men, from the most pestilent heretics." This is utterly untrue. I should answer the contrary.

2. For the next falsehood I turn to p. 8, where he quotes a passage, with inverted commas, as if I had said, " essential truths from God may prove " a dangerous error." I desire this man to point out any such words of mine. My words, at p. 7, are, " This plain Address does not proceed from any spirit " of bitterness against you or your profession, but " from a sincere desire of warning your souls against " embracing *that* [the outward mode of baptism] " for an essential truth, which, *so embraced*, may " prove a dangerous error." A writer must be greatly pinched for argument, when he both forges a falsehood upon his opponent, and makes him speak nonsense at once.

3. He assures us, in the same page, concerning the baptists; " we do not *urge* baptism upon *any* " man, much less *on all men*." That this is not true, I appeal to all those who have had religious conversation with most of them. I appeal likewise to his own book; in which, at p. 31, he blames ministers for not making it the subject of their sermons; and at p. 35, declares, that " as infant baptism, in its " nature and tendency superceeds [i. e. *supersedes*] " and cancels many of the foundation truths of the " gospel, and a part of experimental and practical " godliness, it must be *criminal* to maintain or jus- " tify it." If this be not *urging* the opposite doc- trine both *upon some* and *upon all men*, he would be kind to tell us what is.

4. In p. 12, I had said, " circumcision was but " a trifle, and an outward trifle too like outward " baptism, WHEN CONSIDERED IN ITSELF DISTINCT " from the circumcision of the heart which it signified, " being an outward sign of a spiritual seal; but, trifle " as it was, how warmly did the apostle address the
" Galatians

“ Galatians, when he found them disposed by FALSE
 “ TEACHERS to make it a fine quâ non, an essential
 “ article and condition of salvation?” This honest
 gentleman, for his own convenience, takes the first
 clause of the sentence ending at the word baptism,
 and by lopping off all the rest, makes me call cir-
 cumcision and baptism, *without any limitation*, TRI-
 FLES; which is injurious to my sense, and contrary to
 my meaning. He palms a falsehood upon me, which I
 disclaim; and therefore it becomes *his own*. I would
 say once for all, that I prize all the ordinances of the
 gospel, for the ends to which they were instituted.
 But I rest upon *none* of them for salvation. I look upon
 them as the scaffolding to a building, which, when
 the pile is completed, shall finally be put aside for
 ever. Shall I pay then so much attention to the form
 of the scaffold, as to mistake it for the building itself?

5. I had observed, that “ if you [baptists] make
 “ the ordinance of baptism such a condition, or a
 “ parcel of a condition; or (which is just the same)
 “ if you suppose you stand higher in the favour of
 “ God upon receiving it, and that those, who
 “ have not received it in your way, are therefore
 “ not fit to partake of the other ordinance of the
 “ gospel [the Lord’s supper] with you; I must tell
 “ you plainly, that you *frustrate* (perhaps with no
 “ more design than the *Galatians*) the *grace of God*,
 “ and are really *brought*, while you are seeking to
 “ bring others, *into spiritual bondage*.” My oppo-
 nent first mutilates the passage to serve his turn,
 and then says, that “ this is sending all the baptists
 “ to hell at once.” If this be not a falsehood and
 slander of his own, let every reader determine.

6. After expatiating upon *the washing of regeneration*, mentioned in scripture, I remarked that

“ this spiritual baptism alone will wash away the “ foul spots of bigotry, cavilling and dissension, “ and induce that holy frame of heart, &c.” I mentioned these foul spots in a general way: He himself has obliged his party, by applying the matter to them. *Qui capit, ille facit.* I neither called “ their faithfulness,” nor any good quality among them, by those odious names; and, therefore, here again he has borne false witness against me.

As to his favourite mode of outward baptism, it by no means appears that this writer has been cleansed by it from those foul spots I have mentioned. I never thought it could be efficacious for any such purpose. Indeed, it has had so poor an effect in this instance, that I am not much tempted to follow him. Perhaps he was (as he terms it) “ an improper subject” the *first* time, and is “ just what he was before, if not worse.” Let me advise him to take another dip. We should hope to see him *clean*, at least from the foul spot of *cavilling*, upon a *second* trial.

7. My antagonist ventures another step, and gravely tells us, (p. 13) that “ if this author is not “ a *Roman Catholic*, his noise about schism retorts on “ himself; but we, who never were of the body “ *HE BELONGS TO, &c.*” It matters very little what profession people make, if they are destitute of honour and truth. But as to myself, I am a *Protestant* in the strictest sense: this therefore is the seventh falsehood.

8. These calumnies do not yet satisfy our gentleman: he seems to rise in his rage, as well as in his detraction. I had observed, that *dissension* was a most diabolical and destructive error. This good

good man (p. 15) shifts my word *disension* into his word *baptism*, and then roars out in this shocking language all his own, " If it be a diabolical and " destructive error, Christ must be (O horrid blas- " phemy !) a devil, and his institution a most de- " structive error, and so destructive, that the heart " that retains it, as all the Baptists do, cannot be sa- " ved, &c." So vile a forgery, committed in pounds, shillings, and pence, would forfeit a man's life to his country: But this base and daring calumny, it seems, is *gospel obedience* and *keeping all the commandments* in this man.—This is not all: He has the additional honesty to say of me, that " before he cursed " us, and now sentences us to destruction." The scandalous and abominable falsehood of this assertion will appear from the whole tenor and language of the Address, upon the slightest inspection.

9. This excellent man has not done yet. Why should those strain at gnats, who can swallow camels? In p. 18, he informs his readers, that there are people " who represent them [the divine " commands] as the causes of perdition and dam- " nation to them that obey them :" And then asks concerning me, " Does this simple principle [of " faith] teach him to sentence his brethren to " damnation ?" I sentence my brethren to dam- nation! Infamous falsehood! Where do I hold such language, and when have I expressed such an opinion? God shall judge betwixt this man and me; and if repentance of this evil be not granted him, I would not stand in his stead at the day of judgment for ten thousand worlds. Who would ever have imagined, that a writer, like this, could have quoted a saying from a good man, that " he " would not tell a lye to save the world ;" while

he has had the folly to make a worse bargain, and to tell near a dozen for nothing ?

10. My opponent has been pleased to vent the nine preceding falsehoods against *me* ; but the tenth must be kept like a tythe-pig, entirely for *himself*. He acquaints his readers, p. 17, that “ this author may be a *father-confessor*.” I charge this upon him as a wilful and deliberate falsehood uttered *against his own conscience* ; and I even appeal to that conscience for the truth of the charge. He knows, *precisely knows*, I am not. If a man cannot be honest to his own mind, it is not to be expected that he will be honest to others. I ask him, I ask the upright and faithful of his own profession, I ask the world ; if a man, who really knows me to be a *Protestant*, and can notwithstanding sit down and traduce me as a *Roman Catholic* and a *father-confessor*, does not commit the triple sin of abusing his neighbour, of writing against the light of his own mind, and of holding out a lye before God ? All this may be a part of *his* religion ; but, I bless God, it is none of *mine*.

If the compass of a sheet would have allowed me (and it is not worth while to protract an alteration with such a writer any farther) I designed to have enlarged upon this gentleman’s wanton perversion of my language and sentiments, throughout his unhappy performance. A few remarks, however, shall not be omitted.

In p. 16, he tells us (and with truth) that “ *knowing who are God’s elect BELONGS TO GOD ONLY.*” And yet he adds, that “ *the evidences of it are regeneration, faith, and effectual calling, which WE LOOK FOR as prerequisites to baptism* ”

“ tism.” How! Election known to God only; and yet regeneration, faith, &c. looked for by Man, as a prerequisite to baptism! Can this person then discern the spirits, and point out who have faith, and who not? If he *can* discern faith, &c. in the soul, which is a proof of election, how can election in that case be known to God only? If he *cannot* discern faith, &c. in the soul, how can he presume to make it a *prerequisite* to baptism? And how can that be true, upon *this* ground, which he says is true, that some *improper subjects* may receive it? Either way he contradicts himself, and proves that he is talking about what he indeed does not understand.

P. 11. “ Neither *Simon Magus*, nor a *Judas* “ (says my opponent) speak so contemptuously of “ baptism as this author.” Will this learned man shew us when and where either of these two said a word about the matter? I will allow him to be better acquainted with them, than I am. But that I speak contemptuously of baptism, as a divine ordinance, is a slander. My objection was against laying a *stress* upon any particular *modes* of baptizing even *infants* as well as *adults*. This he might know, if he *would* understand me. One should have thought, that near six months’ consideration of my few words would have qualified him for being a fairer interpreter of them. I may often apply the saying of the Psalmist to this writer, he *mistakes my words*. I am talking about setting up one mode of baptism against another, as a mark or rule of faith: He shuffles the terms, and would make me speak against baptism itself. Let me advise him not to aim at sophistry, without having wit enough to disguise it.

P. 10. He asks, “ Did the Baptists *in every age* “ *since the apostolic day* obey a trifie ? ” Let him but name half a dozen of them in every age, and I will thank him. If he would only discover *one* in some ages, it would be quite a curiosity. But if he *cannot*, what becomes of *his* kind of church all the while ? The words of that blessed martyr *Philpot*, in *Q. Mary's* time, as conveying the opinion of our reformers, I recommend to his attention. “ *Forasmuch* (says that excellent man) “ as the baptism of infants is of more antiquity “ [meaning, than the *excluding* use of *adult baptism*] and hath its beginning from God's word, “ and from *the use of the primitive church* ; it must “ not, in respect of the abuse in the Popish “ church, be neglected, or thought not expedient “ to be used in *Christ's church*. *Auxentius*, one of “ the *Arian* sect, with his adherents, was *one of the first* that denied the baptism of children ; and “ next after him *Pelagius* the heretic, and *some other* that were in *St. Bernard's* time, (as it doth “ appear by his writings) and in our days the “ *Anabaptists* ; an inordinate kind of men, stirred “ up by the devil to the destruction of the gospel.” Fox's *Acta and Mon.* I repeat here, that the present baptists of *England* are widely different in their manners from the late baptists of *Germany* ; and that I know several among them, who, in their lives and conversations, are an honour to the gospel. Yet even this is no justification of that *narrow, separating and dividing* spirit, which makes a criterion of any particular opinion, not necessary to salvation ; as some of these peremptorily do upon the *administration* of baptism. That can never be of God, which raises a *wall of partition* among his Children.

P. 14. This writer asserts, that "the principle and practices of *Jesus*, and ALL THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS, were the same as ours ;" meaning the Baptists. I need take no pains to prove both the temerity and ignorance which attend this falsehood. Every man, who knows any thing of the matter, knows to the contrary.

P. 15. He indirectly calls me a *Jesuit*. I freely acquit *him* of every charge of that sort. *Ignatius of Loyola* would have refused such a disciple. Whoever may be concerned, I am sure he never had a hand in the plot.

I pass over, as a common thing with this person, his perverted quotation of me in p. 15, and shall only remark his Petition on my behalf: "The Lord (says he) give him repentance unto life, but probably he will call this duplicity and hypocrisy."—I will call it *neither*. I will take it in good part, if it be *sincere*; if *not*, he must answer for the *insincerity* to his Maker. However, his prayer comes rather too late; for the repentance he mentions has been granted already. Yet I own there seems reason to suspect, that he wished rather to represent me so profligate and abandoned a "libertine" as to need repentance unto life, than to express any very hearty desire for my welfare.—He, who trieth the hearts of *all* men, will one day try *his*.

'Tis an exercise of patience to keep temper with so unfair an opponent. He asserts, p. 17, that I charge the Baptists "with resting their hope of eternal salvation on it," that is, baptism, and with their "confessing it no article of faith :" And then he adds, "Both are absolute falsities, and he must know them to be so." None are so blind

blind as those, who will not see. These are *his own* mistakes, to say no worse. I beg the reader to turn to the Addrefs, or he will be able to form no judgement to what purpose the words are used. Taken in their proper connexion and sentences, they are neither "absolute falsites, nor do I *know* "them to be so." A considerate person will perceive the author's meaning where they are used, and will find my complaisant friend not a little mistaken. For my own part, I do believe, and am not ashamed to maintain, that whether the *outward mode* of baptism should be administered to *infants* or *adults*, is no article of faith: If it be *one* with this gentleman, he has an article more in his creed than the apostles admitted into theirs.

He says in p. 12, that "it never entered our "hearts to make baptism necessary to salvation." Why then does it enter into their heads, at least into this man's, to say (p. 30) that it is "a means "of salvation," and such a means as that "it is "certainly the highest presumption for any, who "have opportunity, and have a right to use the "means, to neglect and slight them, and *yet expect* "the end salvation?" Or, that "giving up adult bap- "tism is giving up a most solemn profession of faith "in the holy Trinity" (p. 25). Or, that it "is a solemn "part of the counsel of God, which no faithful "gospel minister can keep back, who would be "clear from the blood of all men; for those who "reject it, reject the counsel of God against them- "selves" (p. 26). Or, that "the Pædo-baptists "cruelly cut off one of the church's breasts (bap- "tism) and adopt an abominable harlot in its "stead" (p. 27). Or, that "none but the Bap- "tists can truly say in baptism, that Christ is the "Apostle and high-priest of our profession." (p.

28) And, a great deal more of the same separating, unscriptural, unevangelical trash; which is worth neither comment nor recital?

Bad as it is, it would be more excusable to slander me and forge my sayings, than to falsify, as he has done, the records of God. For he tells his readers, in p. 12, that "the Word *informs* us, "that *none* but persons who have true faith, and "are already saved in a gospel sense, *have a right* "to it [i. e. baptism]." There is no dealing with a man, who will take such liberties as these. I can find *no such* words in *my* Bible, or any thing *like them*: he ought to inform us, who printed *his*. May I ask him, if it be a corrected translation of his own?

In p. 10, he roundly assures us, that "baptism " [meaning *adult* baptism, or there is no sense in "the passage] hath not only authority of a divine "command, but the *undisputed* sanction, and the "invariable practice of very near the three first "centuries, and more or less *in all ages since*; "which *infant* baptism has not." Is this mere ignorance, or downright audacity? However, here I may rest the point. If this person will shew to me, that either *infant* baptism was exploded by the church during the three first centuries (I will say the first century, after *Christ*; or prove, from any authentic ecclesiastical writer, that, in *ever*, century, or in any one century, from *Christ* down to the reformation, any *ten*, among the myriads of martyrs who suffered for the gospel, *precisely declared against* *infant* baptism, and made it a *cause of separation* from other Christians; I will, upon proof, profess myself a baptist directly. But so far is this from being a practicable case, that this writer, notwithstanding his positive air, is unable to shew, that

"in

" in all the ages" he mentions, *adult baptism*, in *contradistinction* and *opposition* to *infant baptism*, has been so much as debated in the world by any others than by notorious heretics.

The postscript about the Pædo-baptists is too puerile to be noticed.

I must also throw aside the wretched performances, which constitute the tail of this pamphlet, as the weakest and worst defence I ever read in my life upon that side of the question. Such a jargon has not often been foisted into the world upon any subject: nor would any man gain the least credit by a refutation of it.

Upon the whole; this writer has by no means solved the *dilemma*, nor indeed attempted any thing *fairly* towards it. The bulk of his piece (so far as it concerns me) is a continued series of personality and misquotation, carried on by such a spirit of bitterness and ill-will, as makes it no uncharitable judgment to say, that it is very opposite to *the mind which was in Christ Jesus*. It cannot be the spirit of God, which will lead a man to *this kind* of warfare. Indeed, if I understand him right, he disclaims all title to it, and asserts (in p. 4, of his appendix) that he knows none that pretend to have the baptism of the Holy Ghost, "except it be a de-
" luded madman here and there." The promise of the Holy Ghost is unto believers and to their children; and it can no where be proved that the baptism of the Holy Ghost *strictly* and *peculiarly* means the power of working miracles. And when I mentioned something about *the joy of the soul*; he takes fire at the phrase, and insinuates, with an evil mind (p. 13) that I mean " the five popish sacra-
" ments

"ments that protestants renounce;" forgetting that the kingdom of God, or the gospel, consists in *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; that it is the privilege of *the saints to shout for joy*; and that believers in all ages have acknowledged the blessedness of it with gratitude to *HIM*, who bestowed it upon them. If he knows nothing of this *joy of the soul*, may it be *my portion* now and for ever!

One word to this writer himself, and I take my leave of him, perhaps entirely.

SIR,

I take the liberty to say, that your performances have proved, how little you know *what manner of spirit you are of*. Unless I had touched *Diana*, why should *Demetrius* be *angry*? If I had offended truth, I was an object of your pity; if I had written against it, you should have answered, not with detraction and falsehood, but (if you could) by arguments of scripture and reason; if I had taken up the matter with a base and malevolent intention, it was your duty to have expostulated with firmness, yet mixed with decency. As the case now stands, you have wounded your own cause, if not your own soul. A day will shortly come (and God knows how soon) when you and I must give account of these papers before an holy and impartial tribunal. It behoves us both to examine our consciences, whether our pens have been guided by truth, or dipped in perversion and slander. I lay my hand upon my heart, and I call God to witness the truth of my assertion, that I never sat down to write with bitterness against your party, nor ever rose up with enmity against their persons. I thought I saw the truth of God; I wrote according to my light; and I wished

I wished it to profit those, for whom it was meant: I leave the issue to **HIM**, who orders all things for the best. I bear no ill-will, even to you. Though I have been obliged, in my own defence, to expose your calumnies; you shall ever find me a Christian; who neither wishes ill, nor would do ill, to his neighbour. *Things, and not men; truth, and not persons;* was the great subject of my inquiry. And whether my name be *English, Scotch, or Irish*; I cannot imagine, how any words of mine can be the more or less true upon that account. I have no reason, however, to be ashamed of my name or my profession; but I have not quite vanity or ostentation enough to think them of any consequence in this debate. Truth does not, and *cannot*, depend upon *such* foundations; abuse and scurrility possibly *may*: and therefore I shall subscribe myself, as 'before,

The Baptists' sincere well-wisher,

A LAYMAN.

Dec. 16, 1773.

“ **No outward forms can make us clean :**
“ **The leprosy lies deep within.”**

Dr. WATTS.

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